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Three Moments in Jewish Philosophy

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I would like to thank the following people for having proofread my text: Noémie Benchimol, Shemuel Lampronti and Georges-Elia Sarfati.

1 The purpose of this article is to offer a new periodization of Jewish philosophy and to reflect on the definition of Jewish philosophy. It will therefore deal with the characteristic style of each Jewish philosophy rather than with their content. I shall identify three moments in the history of Jewish philosophy: the Arab moment, the German moment, and the analytic moment; this last moment, largely unknown, will be studied more in depth. This paper does not aim to present an exhaustive panorama or a representative synthesis of the history of Jewish philosophy. The selected authors and concepts are mentioned here because they give us the opportunity to reflect on the nature and the function of Jewish philosophy in a new light.

What is the Philosophy of Judaism?

2 The German Enlightenment in the 18th century invented the historigraphic category of "Jewish philosophy" (Westerkamp 2008: 536). The kind of authors one fits into that category depends on one's definition of Jewish philosophy.[1] To define the latter, one may ask what characterizes Jewish philosophy within the general field of philosophy.[2] To answer that question, Raphael Jospe distinguishes two approaches (Jospe 1997: 113-114 and Jospe 2008: 19-33): the essentialist and the formalist approaches. According to the essentialist approach, there exists an essential core of Judaism, which Jewish philosophy would explain and rationalize. According to Jospe, Julius Guttmann and Colette Sirat share this approach. Guttmann thought that the distinctiveness of Jewish philosophy was its religious orientation.[3] Sirat explains that Jewish philosophy does not come from Jewish sources but that it is specific in that it strives to harmonize philosophy and the Jewish tradition (Jospe 2008: 20). According to this essentialist model, Jewish philosophy

should not only focus on religious questions; it must also agree with the "Jewish religious tradition" and that is the reason why neither Guttmann nor Sirat included Spinoza among the Jewish philosophers – at the most, Guttmann wrote about the *influence* of Jewish philosophy on the author of *The Ethics*. The formalist approach rejects this essentialism because it is too narrow but also because it is marred by an unacceptable flaw: it is prescriptive rather than descriptive. Someone who believes that Judaism has an *essence* inevitably dissects texts into Jewish and non-Jewish elements, an operation that is neither feasible nor useful; moreover, this prescriptive approach favors value judgments.

3 Formalism can be divided into two types. Extreme formalism calls Jewish philosophy any philosophy produced by a Jewish person, whatever the definition given for "Jewish" (Jospe 1997: 113). According to moderate formalism, with which Jospe identifies and which Judah Ha-Levi prefigured, Jospe says, the Jewish identity of the author is a necessary condition but does not suffice. As Jospe explains, a Jew who plays football doesn't make it a Jewish football. Extreme formalism is obviously untenable in the following situation: in the case that a philosopher realized at the end of his career that he was Jewish, according to extreme formalism, this would retroactively turn his work into a contribution to Jewish philosophy. These two absurd examples prove that the criterion used by extreme formalism to define Jewish philosophy is insufficient. Moderate formalists include reading and referring to Jewish sources or addressing Jewish issues as the other necessary factors to define a philosophy as Jewish. While essentialism focuses on the Jewish content, moderate formalism rather takes into account the Jewish context. This moderate formalist definition is quite broad and I wish to turn my attention to another seemingly narrower one. In an article I will analyze further below, Yitzhak Melamed suggests the following definition:

> "Unlike many others, I do not take a Jewish philosopher to be someone who is (a) Jewish and (b) a philosopher, but rather suggest that *Jewish philosophy is the attempt to provide a well-argued and informed account of Jewish religious and cultural beliefs and practices*." (Melamed 2009: 176)

4 This definition elicits two comments. The first one is about the connection between philosophy and Judaism: I will concentrate on the manner by which Jewish philosophers have used non-Jewish philosophies in order to solve problems they had from the start. In other words, I will not examine so much the way Jews answered philosophical questions but rather the way they dealt with internal issues by resorting to the Greek, Arab, German, or other philosophical methods. The question is then to what extent general philosophy was useful to the Jews, even though the Jews also contributed to the elaboration of general philosophy – and sometimes even did so without any reference to the Talmudic texts or any other identified Jewish source.

5 The second comment has to do with the study of the Talmud and with the opposition between the conceptualist and the critical approaches.[4] The conceptualist approach deliberately disdains historical reality and the historian's methods. A rejection of historical depth isn't necessarily the product of ignorance and may be the result of a hermeneutical choice. The texts are all brought to the same level, as if forming a synchronic and homogenous whole. This approach prevails in the study of the Talmud in the traditional world of the *yeshivot.* Philosophically speaking, conceptualism is not an error but historically speaking, it is inaudible. The critical approach takes into account the history of the texts, their modification over time, their successive editions. This

critical approach is philosophically and historically receivable. But from the conceptualist's point of view, a text of Jewish philosophy does not have to meet the criteria of the critical approach.

6 The definition of Jewish philosophy I have just given isn't meant to state what Jewish philosophy *essentially* is or should be but rather offers a new way of measuring its evolution. Emphasizing the fundamental place of the Talmud leads me to select specific authors and not others in my three-fold study. Most histories of Jewish philosophy divide it into the Greek, the Arab, and the German periods.[5] The periodization I propose is guided by another choice. While the contribution of analytic philosophy is more often than not overlooked – mainly because of the scarcity of the texts currently available – the latter will here be reviewed with some attention.

The Arab Moment

7 I shall now describe briefly and synthetically the Arab moment, with the sole purpose to draw the reader's attention to the role the profane (*i.e.* non-Jewish) philosophy played in Jewish philosophy. The Jewish and the Arab philosophies emerged at the same time, around the 9th and the 10th centuries. In fact, Jewish philosophy first developed in Arabic. Hebrew became the Jewish philosophy's main language only later, after Maimonides. In its earliest stages, Arabic-speaking Jewish philosophers quoted many non-Jewish philosophers; ibn Gabirol didn't mention any Jewish theme in his *Fons Vitae* and this text was thought to be Christian until the 19th century (Hughes 2011: 1005). Gradually, the Jewish philosophers produced enough material to work without referring frequently and directly (in Arabic) to authors from other religions. Which authors did the Jewish philosophers study? In a letter, Maimonides recommends one to read Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, and Averroes, as well as Al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Ibn Bajja (Harvey 2003: 263). Now it is only through selected texts translated into Hebrew that post-Maimonides philosophers had access to these authors.

8 One of the pivotal events in Medieval Jewish philosophy is the appearance of Aristotelianism. The latter became known to the Arab philosophic circles in the 10th century but became the dominant paradigm in Jewish philosophy only in the mid-12th century (Hugues 2011: 1006). Even when tinged with Neo-Platonism, Aristotelianism is a philosophy, which is based on a certain view of the world on the one hand, and which offers analytical tools that are still relevant today, for some of them. Jewish philosophy is influenced both by the Aristotelian view of the world (which does not have unanimous support) and by a number of Aristotelian concepts which are to a certain extent independent of a given view of the world. Indeed, Aristotle theorized universals at the foundation of science – the concept of definition, among others. The mere theorization of definition by genus and differentia did not influence so much the theses found in Medieval Jewish literature but the style of its authors. To better explain this point, I would like to compare briefly an aspect of Talmudic literature and Aristotelian philosophy. The exceptional technical nature of Talmudic literature stands out; yet, before their encounter with Aristotelian philosophy, Talmudic thinkers lacked a structured theory of the definition. This is not surprising since the definition is a universal concept (just like the genus, the differentia, the accidental) and the Talmud does not explicitly theorize universals. Gradually, however, the definition became one of

the tools with which Jewish philosophers formulated problems raised in Talmudic literature.

9 The Arab moment therefore inspired Jewish philosophy, which dealt with two types of issues: the issues inherent in the Greco-Arab philosophy, which the Jewish thinkers attempted to solve; and the typical Talmudic questions they formulated thanks to Aristotelian concepts. Rather than drawing up a fruitless taxonomy of the issues the philosophers dealt with and classifying them, I will simply sum up the Arab moment as the encounter between two literary genres (the Talmudic one and the philosophic one) that inspired and enriched each other.

The German Moment

10 One cannot skip from the middle of the Arabic Middle-Ages to the German 17th century without mentioning the fact that between these two periods, the Jewish philosophy underwent many changes, which I will not recall. I wish to clarify the title of this subpart: the "German moment" includes at least two types of literary genres – the traditional German Jewish philosophy and the science of Judaism. The latter is the application of historical and philological concepts to Jewish texts. This critical method adopted by Judeo-German scholars did not aim to solve conceptual Talmudic problems (conceptual approach) in particular; it rather attempted to understand the historical development of this literature, its passing down, and the evolution of its vocabulary (critical approach). The science of Judaism thus benefited the History and Literary History departments more than the Philosophy department. In general, the science of Judaism has some of the characteristics of the critical approach but none of the conceptual one.

11 As for Jewish philosophy, it seems that it overall assimilated the contemporary philosophical notions to the point that it took part in the debates that divided the German philosophers. Thus, the majority of the Jewish philosophers took a stand on Hegel's philosophy,[6] either because they were Hegelian or because they had become anti-Hegelian, at the times when most of the German philosophers themselves were Hegelian and then anti-Hegelian. Krochmal's philosophy is Hegelian (Adlerblum 1917: 184) while Lévinas' is anti-Hegelian.[7] Rosenzweig, a specialist of Hegel's philosophy, played a pivotal role between the Jewish Hegelian and non-Hegelian philosophers.[8] More generally, the Jewish philosophers experienced "a rupture which borders on parricide": that of Kant for Hermann Cohen, of Hegel for Rosenzweig, and of Heidegger for Lévinas[9] (Nordmann 2007: 247). The image of the parricide is relevant and the metaphor can be extended to explain the extent to which Lévinas is the spiritual son and heir of these thinkers he sometimes disputes. Parricide has always been a family affair.

12 What has this German moment become? Just like German philosophy (Kantianism, German Idealism, German Romanticism, Existentialism, and Phenomenology) found in France a new fertile ground, the center of gravity of the German Jewish philosophy moved there.[10] In fact, the French Jewish philosophy is German in many respects: its relationship – however strained it is – with Hegelianism fits it by right in general French philosophy (Janicaud 1992, Lellouche 2006). The question as to what makes it a Jewish philosophy then arises.

13 Today, the figure of Lévinas enjoys much consideration. After the Second World War in particular, this philosopher who first studied phenomenology strove to expound

Talmudic passages in the light of phenomenology[11]. Now Talmudic literature is close to the Anglo-Saxon pragmatism (Adlerblum 1917: 187-189) as much as it is remote from the concerns of Germanophile philosophers. Reading the Talmud with the help of the categories of German Idealism, of Phenomenology, or of Existentialism is a daring intellectual enterprise; but I wonder if by reading Lévinas, one doesn't better understand Husserl or Heidegger than the questions raised by the Talmud before it was read through the lens of philosophy.

14 Lévinas was criticized in different ways for his contributions to various fields. To the field of general philosophy: in his book *Difficile Levinas. Peut-on ne pas être levinassien ?*, Raphaël Lellouche blames Lévinas for subverting the Buberian idea of the dialogue between the I and Thou (Lellouche 2006: 74-78) and for delivering unusable and inhuman ethics[12]. To the field of the philosophy of Judaism, more specifically: we must admit that Lévinas placed the study of the Talmud at the center of his Jewish philosophy. I shall nevertheless quote the criticism Melamed directs not only to Lévinas, but to the majority of modern Jewish philosophers – with the exception of Salomon Maimon:

> "The reality for modern Jewish philosophy was that most of its participants were either good philosophers (Spinoza and Cohen) *or* well informed in Jewish texts (Mendelssohn, Krochmal, Soloveitchik), though unfortunately in many cases they were *neither* Jewishly informed *nor* good philosophers. Maimon's case, however, provides some hope for a better future for modern Jewish philosophy."[13] (Melamed 2009: 186-187)

15 Generally, Melamed reproaches modern Jewish philosophers[14] for adopting the opposition between Christian universalism and Jewish particularism; and for reducing religious literature to the Bible as did, *mutatis mutandis*, the Protestant theologians –"with the exception of two or three figures (primarily Leibowitz, Soloveitchik, and Levinas)" (Melamed 2009: 176 and 181). The harshness of Melamed's judgment is partly due to the fact that he includes in "modern Jewish philosophy" only continental authors. It is high time we broaden this category and add analytic philosophers, following Jed Lewinsohn's invitation (Lewinsohn 2007: 97-99).

16 During the German moment of Jewish philosophy, more than in its Arab period, Judaism became somewhat secondary: more often than not, the Jewish authors first contributed to general philosophy and only later did they address issues having to do with Judaism. While the Jewish thinkers of Arab philosophy enlisted the latter to help them solve Talmudic problems – to apologetic ends, at times – the Jewish philosophers of the German moment took the opposite direction by trying to provide a Jewish answer to the questions and the issues at the heart of the German Christian philosophy.

The Analytic Moment

17 In order to understand the nature of the analytic moment, the genesis of this philosophic genre must be briefly recalled. Analytic philosophy opposes continental philosophy[15] – its Hegelian and post-Hegelian currents of thought, in particular – and intends to solve philosophical problems through language analysis.[16] Two main currents coexist in analytic philosophy; what differentiates between them is the relative importance they attach to ordinary language as the ultimate arbitrator in philosophical debates. The adepts of the philosophy of ordinary language find in the latter a material that enables

them to explain and clear up philosophic problems. For the more logic-driven current, ordinary language – at least in the way we know it to function – cannot assume such a predominant role: philosophical skepticism always favored a careful formulation of propositions in order to "regiment" ordinary language, as Quine says.

18 Analytic philosophy presents itself in terms of problems and solutions, like the rest of science, in fact. Analytic philosophy does not offer specific theses and is neutral with regards to political, religious, or ontological currents. Thinkers of analytic philosophy thus include nominalists, idealists, atheists, believers, and followers of all opinions and theses. What connects analytic philosophers is a specific criterion of stylistic quality: precise argumentation. A great analytic philosopher is not an author whose intuition inspired him to *see* something; the great analytic philosopher is the one who argues best and who answers to objections in the clearest and most convincing manner. Indeed, clarity is a gold standard of quality in analytic philosophy. It goes without saying that for analytic philosophy, obscure philosophical utterances are unacceptable and constitute in no way a sign of profundity. Analytic philosophy can actually be viewed as the product of a reaction to continental philosophy or as a return to the pre-Hegelian philosophic style. Assuredly, Descartes' answers to the objections raised to his metaphysical meditations display the same features as those characterizing analytic philosophy.

19 The authors that apply analytic philosophy to Talmudic disputations don't always come from the Philosophy departments;[17] they are active notably in the fields of mathematics and physics. I shall quote a few of them, without claiming to provide an exhaustive list. Philosopher and mathematician Curtis Franks is an expert on Hilbert and Gödel; he calls upon mathematics to shed light on a rather complex controversy about the relative force of four types of arguments (Franks 2012): between four types of traditional arguments in Talmudic literature, Franks attempts to determine which ones are likely to bring forth conclusions that may serve as the premise to new reasoning.[18] Josef Stern uses the notions developed by Nelson Goodman to analyze the Jewish rituals that are relevant from the legal (halakhic) point of view (Stern 1987). Goodman's semiotics is based on a distinction between various modes of reference: denotation, exemplification, and expression.[19]

20 Eli Hirsch, who was researching and teaching on the problem of identity in metaphysics, thought that the ideas he was expounding could not be easily exemplified and had no practical significance: the image of the wooden ship whose planks are gradually replaced is indeed tangible but does not matter as long as no one claims ownership of the boat or of the planks. He therefore went back to study the Talmud. According to him, the Talmudists "are among the most analytical people on earth" (Hirsch 1999: 176). He then managed to provide concrete examples for extremely abstract problems of analytic philosophy. In fact, in the work of Eli Hirsch, the Talmudic disputation sheds light on metaphysical issues and vice-versa. Hirsch undertook a very difficult task and he succeeded: he managed to draw the attention of two very different kinds of readers, who learned about a field they did not know about.

21 Moshe Koppel deserves a special mention. This author opens his remarkable book *Meta-halakha. Logic, Intuition and the Unfolding of Jewish Law* (Koppel 1997) on a central question of the philosophy of *halakha* (Jewish law): does all of what we call *halakha* derive from the principles given at Mount Sinai? This issue is quite sensitive as both answers, though in contradiction with each other, seem right:

> "Confronted with that question, most Orthodox Jews feel profoundly uncomfortable giving an answer. On the one hand, one would like to say that everything was given to Moshe on Mount Sinai and that after that the development of Halakha is just a matter of unfolding. One may qualify this answer by adding that although, to be sure, the Jews in those days did not have, for instance, electricity, the principles given at Mount Sinai were sufficiently broad and well-defined that we can derive the laws about electricity from them. Indeed, this response sounds like the 'religiously correct' thing to say.'
> On the other hand, one would also want to defend the opposite view, namely, that Halakha is constantly being renewed and that scholars in every generation can add their own insights and interpretations. Great scholars, who have the power to interpret, add something novel to Halakha. Thus, in some sense, to say that Halakha develops beyond what was given at Sinai is also religiously correct. Moreover, the mere existence of disputes would seem to be incontrovertible proof that Halakha cannot be derived in a mechanical fashion from what happened at Mount Sinai; had it been, there would be nothing to argue about. These disputes clearly show that the manner in which Halakha unfolds depends very much upon how it is interpreted." (Koppel 1997: 3-4)

22 This passage elicits a few comments. Firstly, the author speaks from *within* Judaism – Orthodox Judaism, what's more. While anyone who takes a philosophical interest in Judaism generally addresses the topics of the Holocaust, the Jewish condition, or Jewish humor, Koppel raises an issue related to *halakha* and wishes to account for Orthodox Judaism. The way Koppel tackles the subject may seem naïve to anyone who is not familiar with analytic philosophy: a text that includes a contradiction is awfully flawed, while the oxymoron is one of the most common philosophical device in continental philosophy. Koppel is well aware of the fact that the question can be answered in two opposite ways and he explicates the nature of this opposition in the most unequivocal terms.

23 Secondly, Koppel mentions right away the existence of disputes between the Talmudic sages as one of the elements in favor of one answer over the other: the one that contests the fact that all *halakha* derived from the principles given at Mount Sinai. The disagreements between the protagonists in the Talmud are highlighted in the first page of Koppel's work. Once more, the opposition to continental philosophy is obvious: while otherness is a celebrated concept in the anti-Hegelian continental philosophy – notably in Lévinas' thought – the lack of agreement is showed to be if not an anomaly at least a problem Koppel intends to solve.

24 In order to solve the antinomy between the one-time gift of the entire *halakha* at Mount Sinai and its ongoing development over time, Koppel uses several concepts defined in philosophy and mathematics, such as unpredictability, determinism, autonomy, over-interpretation, under-interpretation, modelability, artificial intelligence, and computability.

> "We now have the tools to formulate the central thesis of this book: the fundamental ideas of Judaism can be understood in the light of the assumption that the process by which Halakha is generated is autonomous, that the Halakha generated is not modelable."[20] (Koppel 1997: 34)

25 Without delving into a detailed demonstration, let us recall that autonomy combines consistency and unpredictability. *Halakha* developed both consistently and unpredictably. Indeed, if this process were consistent without being unpredictable, the novel conclusions coming out of the Talmudic debates would be pointless. If on the contrary the development of the *halakha* were unpredictable without a minimum of consistency, we would lose sight of the fact that this development derives from the principles given at Mount Sinai.

26 Koppel's reflection is meta-halakhic in that it raises epistemological questions at the foundation of the legal interpretation process in *halakha*. We can describe his approach in brief as a philosophy of law applied to Talmudic law and equipped with tools produced by analytic philosophy and mathematics.

27 Koppel also wrote about the way the Talmudic sages deal with uncertainty, in the cases in which the judge does not have all the necessary information in order to pass a judgment. Koppel compared different types of statements that include probabilities: classic probabilities, frequency probability, and subjective probability. Contrasting the various statements enables the author to analyze more thoroughly the different types of probabilities outlined in the Talmud (Koppel 2003). Koppel's highly articulate prose helps the reader grasp both the Talmudic legal processes and the mathematical concepts. Many mathematicians also study the Talmud but do not use their knowledge in each field to enrich the other. Koppel, on the contrary, draws from both fields and offers the reader a text whose content is certainly difficult, but made easier by Koppel's exceptional pedagogy.

28 Many other authors and texts of analytic philosophy should be mentioned here (notably Menachem Fisch, Jed Lewinsohn, Aaron Segal, Samuel Lebens, Michael Abraham's numerous works in Hebrew, as well as the journal *Higayon*, whose articles focus on Talmudic logic). Moreover, several unpublished texts, written among others by authors quoted in this article, circulate and elicit comments and scholarly debates. In the future, these articles might well come out in print after successfully passing the test that characterizes analytic philosophy: criticism of argumentation.[21]

29 Argumentation has indeed become the predominant characteristic trait of analytic philosophy, distinguishing the latter from previous moments in Jewish philosophy. More than in its German and Arab moments, the Jewish philosophy of the analytic moment centers on the Talmud and uses the philosophic and scientific literature in order to solve problems raised in the Talmudic text. In this case, philosophy serves the conceptual study of the Talmud. Conclusion

30 The history of philosophy seems to evolve in recurrent cycles: in the beginning, the authors get to know the texts and the notions produced by the surrounding philosophy; then, the dialogue with the inspirational source recedes and gives way to an internal research which sometimes ends – at the close of the cycle – with a relentless commentary of Jewish thinkers no more related to the inspiring authors.

31 The analytic Jewish philosophy is in its early stages. No one knows how it will look like in the future. Rightly or wrongly, some have said that the continental Jewish philosophy has come to an end (Melamed 2009) or doesn't exist any more.

32 If both the continental and the analytic philosophies shared the same goal, we could attempt to determine which one reaches it best. This is not the case, however, and it would be fruitless to agree with one over the other. On the other hand, we can rightfully

ask ourselves what we want tomorrow's Jewish philosophy to look like: do we want Jewish philosophy to be as profound as the Franco-German Christian philosophy, with texts we still need to fully understand? Or do we favor a philosophical style that highlights clarity and inventiveness in its argumentation?[22] In any case, if we go by the assumption that one of the objectives of Jewish philosophy is to shed a new light on the Talmudic literature – and this assumption is not an imperative – the analytic philosophy obviously constitutes a good tool.[23] Finally, as Eli Hirsch shows, we might well get a better understanding of the arduous questions of analytic philosophy thanks to the relatively concrete cases found in the Talmud. In terms of literary genre, though Talmudic literature and analytic philosophy come from two very different worlds, they share a characteristic: argumentation is fundamental.[24] A new literary genre may be seeing the light of the day.

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NOTES

1. Philo of Alexandria is thought to be one of the first Jewish philosophers: this Hellenistic Jew attempted to harmonize Judaism and philosophy. Though Philo focused on Jewish texts, which he interpreted thanks to philosophical concepts, his work influenced the early Christian writers more than the Jewish thinkers.
2. Gérard Bensussan insists on the *a priori* incompatibility and the heterogeneity between Judaism and philosophy (Bensussan 2001).
3. About the relevance of Guttman's book today (Guttmann 1933), see Steven Harvey's article (Harvey 2007).
4. I have taken the liberty of establishing this opposition on the basis of Samuel Lebens' articles, to be published. The texts of other authors, who have explained these ideas more in depth, are worth referring to.
5. "We can then say that there is a Greek moment in the history of Jewish philosophy, and there is a Medieval-Arab moment and a Modern-German moment, if we want to mention only the three most remarkable sequences, the three configurations in which the practice of translation has had the biggest impact on what is at stake when images are being turned into concepts" (Bensussan 2001: 389).

6. Regarding Mendelsohn, whose philosophical activity predates the opposition between Hegelian and anti-Hegelian thinkers, one should refer to Dominique Bourel's book, which presents Mendelsohn's relation to the ideas of the German Enlightenment (Bourel 2004).

7. According to Adlerblum, Samson Raphael Hirsch was inspired by Fichte's works (Adlerblum 1917: 183).

8. Lellouche criticizes this type of anti-Hegelianism: "it seems that from Rosenzweig to Levinas and Benny Lévy, the 'Jewish thought' got enmeshed into the net of anti-Hegelianism and now needs to get disentangled" (Lellouche 2006: 125).

9. Lellouche writes that although Lévinas did not fully understand Heidegger's thought (Lellouche 2006: 152), Lévinas' philosophy had more in common with Heidegger's than with Husserl's (Lellouche 2006: 73 et 108).

10. Maurice-Ruben Hayoun raises the question about Jewish philosophy today: "But what about [Jewish philosophy] today? Well, thanks to a peculiar swing of the pendulum – a trademark of Jewish history – Paris and more generally the French-speaking world are taking the matters over" (Hayoun 2005 : 151).

11. Regarding the connection between Lévinas' work and *halakha*, the reader should refer to Michael Fagenblat (Fagenblat 2008).

12. Kenneth Seeskin states that according to Buber the I/Thou opposition has more to do with intuitions than with theoretical concepts: "the I/Thou relationship is based on a series of intuitions rather than a theoretical apparatus" (Seeskin 1991: 161).

13. Husik's concluding words echo Melamed's thought about the post-Medieval Jewish philosophy: "There have appeared philosophers among the Jews in succeeding centuries, but they either philosophized without regard to Judaism and in opposition to its fundamental dogmas, thus incurring the wrath and exclusion of the synagogue, or they sought to dissociate Judaism from theoretical speculation on the ground that the Jewish religion is not a philosophy but a rule of conduct. In more recent times, Jewry has divided itself into sects and under the influence of modern individualism has lost its central authority making every group the arbiter of its own belief and practice and narrowing the religious influence to matters of ceremony and communal activity of a practical character. *There are Jews now and there are philosophers, but there are no Jewish philosophers and there is no Jewish philosophy*" (Husik 1916: 431-432, I highlight).

14. The format of this article is such that I cannot give a detailed presentation of the thought of every modern Jewish philosopher, not even the major ones.

15. The current opposition between analytic and continental philosophies shouldn't mask their commonalities in terms of their origin (Dummett 1993, Benoist 2001).

16. Pascal Engel's *La dispute* is an excellent introduction to the opposition between the continental and the analytic philosophies (Engel 1997). Whatever their field of expertise, analytic philosophers all receive an academic training emphasizing argumentation. I have chosen to refer to this type of philosophy as "analytic" rather than "Anglo-Saxon" since authors who write in other languages than English have also adopted the analytic style.

17. Seeskin does not see any great Jewish philosopher in the contemporary Anglo-Saxon world: " The analytic movement that dominated Anglo-American departments for the greater part of this century had little impact on Jewish thought. There is no one who stands to Jewish philosophy as Alvin Plantinga, Philip Quinn, or Ninian Smart stand to Christian" (Seeskin 1991: 164).

18. Studying the various types of arguments is of course quite fruitful. Several thinkers co-authored an article on the *a fortiori* argument in the Talmud (Abraham, Gabbay, and Schild 2009). For the *kelal ufrat* argument, see Abraham, Gabbay, Hazut, Maruvka, and Schild 2011.

19. Personally, I think that Goodman's semiotics may also explain many characteristics of the vocabulary pertaining to the Talmudic legal system.

20. Koppel is very cautious: he does not say that *halakha* actually is autonomous but that this assumption helps us understand the development of the Jewish law.

21. The readers who might be interested in reading unpublished articles may refer to the following website: http://www.theapj.com. It posts announcements of debates conducted on line in the analytic tradition: questions and criticisms are addressed to the author and are followed by argumentative exchanges on the topics raised.
22. Lellouche says that Lévinas "refuses argumentation" and that with him, "rhetoric comes back," although Lellouche also acknowledges the "poetic qualities" of this philosopher (Lellouche 2006: 109).
23. Hilary Putnam, one of the most important thinkers of analytic philosophy today, dedicated one of his books to Judaism. Although he usually debates with the majority of the great analytic philosophers, he chooses in this work to address such philosophers as Rosenzweig, Buber, Wittgenstein, and Lévinas (Putnam 2008).
24. Regarding Jewish philosophy, Seeskin wrote in 1991: "I submit that the most important work over the next decade will be constructive and argumentative" (Seeskin 1991: 167).

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